

On the Notion of Linguistic Convention (*saṃketa*) in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*

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Abstract The aim of this study is to clarify the meaning of the term *saṃketa*, which is usually translated as ‘(linguistic) convention’, in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, the first and the most authoritative commentary to the *Yogasūtras*. This paper is a contribution to the reconstruction of the classical Yoga view on the relation between word and its meaning, for *saṃketa* is a key term used by this *darśana* in discussing this relation. The textual analysis of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* has led me to the conclusion that its author’s understanding of the linguistic convention (*saṃketa*) is different from the notion of the linguistic convention (*saṃketasamaya*) of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas and similar to the notion of the linguistic convention (*samaya/saṃketa*) of the Grammarians (as presented in Houben’s article “Bharṭṛhari’s *samaya*/Helārāja’s *saṃketa*. A contribution to the reconstruction of the Grammarian’s discussion with the Vaiśeṣikas on the relation between *śabda* and *artha*”, published in the “Journal of Indian Philosophy”). These are interpretations of the term *saṃketa* which reflect *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*’s understanding of the linguistic convention: the tradition of the usage of words, established (practice/custom of the) usage of words. *Saṃketa* of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, unlike *saṃketasamaya* of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, is not an agreement established by anyone, but an agreement in the sense of tradition, established practice, or established custom. Unlike the *saṃketasamaya* of these philosophers, the *saṃketa* of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, having neither beginning nor end, is not re-created (re-established), but only made known (revealed) at the beginning of each cycle of existence of the world.

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On the Notion of Linguistic Convention (*saṃketa*) in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*

A key term used in classical Yoga¹ in the discussion of the relation between word (*śabda*) and its meaning (*artha*) is *saṃketa*, which is usually translated as ‘(linguistic) convention’. In the textual tradition of Pātañjala Yoga this term appears first in the

¹ By ‘classical Yoga’ I understand that form of Yoga which was codified in the *Yogasūtras* (YS) and in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* (YBh), the first and the most authoritative and widely known commentary to the YS (see footnote 2 on the authorship and date of the YS and YBh). In this article I shall use the terms ‘classical Yoga’ and ‘Pātañjala Yoga’ synonymously. There is no consensus among the scholars as to the texts belonging to the classical Yoga tradition. In my opinion, this question is still open, and its clarification depends first of all on the careful study of the extant commentaries to the YS and YBh, which is not possible without complete and reliable critical editions of these commentaries (the situation of the lack of such editions of the classical Yoga texts is described by Maas (2013, pp. 78–81); it looks like nowadays there are only two critical editions which are based on all available important manuscripts and possess satisfactory scholarly apparatus: the critical edition of the first chapter of the YS and YBh prepared by Maas and the unpublished critical edition of the first chapter of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra-vivaraṇa* prepared by Harimoto (the shortcomings of the 1952 complete edition of this text are described in Harimoto 2014, pp. 15–16); as we see, each of these editions embraces only the first part of the respective text).

Larson says that the YS, YBh, and *Tattvavaiśārādī* (ca. 950–1000 CE according to Acharya (2014, p. XXVIII); ca. 850–950 CE according to Larson (Larson and Bhattacharya 2011, pp. 9, 54)) of Vācaspati Miśra “taken together provide the core textual evidence for Pātañjalayogaśāstra”, calling these three texts its “core textual complex” (2011, pp. 65, 71). As to the *Tattvavaiśārādī*, it is a detailed, profound, and original commentary to the YS and YBh (according to the second opening *śloka* of the *Tattvavaiśārādī*, it is a commentary to the YBh). Its author Vācaspati Miśra, though not himself a follower of Yoga, in his *Tattvavaiśārādī* is faithful to the thought of the texts he comments upon. This feature distinguishes the *Tattvavaiśārādī* from many other commentaries and subcommentaries to the YS, for example from the *Yogavārttika* (ca. 1550 CE according to Larson (Larson and Bhattacharya 2011, pp. 9, 54)) by Vijñāna Bhikṣu. Vijñāna Bhikṣu interprets Yoga as an integral part of his *bheda-abheda* Vedānta, and for this reason I do not include his *Yogavārttika* into the textual tradition of Pātañjala Yoga.

It is very probable that one more text, namely the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa*, must be added to this “core textual complex” of Pātañjala Yoga (see footnote 3 on the authorship and date of this commentary). The Vedāntic inclination of the author of this commentary on the YS and YBh is obvious, especially when he explains the passages about Īśvara (for the detailed account of the Vedāntic influence in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* see Leggett’s (1992) introduction to his English translation of this text). On the other hand, it looks like in this commentary in most cases the foundations and main premises of the Pātañjala Yoga system remain intact. I tend to agree with Rukmani that “the Vivaraṇakāra is indeed advocating the ontological position of the Yoga system without any advaitic comments” (1992, p. 422).

I think that the most important criterion for treating a commentary or a subcommentary to the YS as a classical Yoga text is its faithfulness to the thought of Yoga of the YS and the YBh, the preservation of the main distinctive features and ontological, epistemological, and soteriological grounds of the system presented in these texts (for example, I shall not treat as a classical Yoga text a commentary that undercuts the dualism of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*). If we rely upon this criterion only, we certainly include in the textual tradition of classical Yoga the *Rājamārtanḍa* (ca. 1050 CE according to Larson (Larson and Bhattacharya 2011, pp. 9, 54)), the commentary on the YS by Bhoja Deva. The main question which remains open for me is if this criterion is sufficient for treating this or that commentary to the YS or the YBh as the classical Yoga text, or some additional criteria or/and chronological limits should be established.

*Yogasūtrabhāṣya*² (YBh). We encounter it also in many later commentaries to the *Yogasūtras* (YS) and YBh, such as *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa*,³ *Tattvavaiśārādī*,

² Before the critical edition of the first chapter of the YS and YBh prepared by Maas and the series of his publications in which Maas inquired into the question of the authorship of these texts (2006, pp. XII–XIX, 2008, pp. 112–113, 2013, pp. 57–69) it had been generally accepted by scholars that one person, called Patañjali (there was no definite answer to the question whether it was the real name of the compiler of the YS or the name ascribed to him by tradition (see Larson and Bhattacharya 1987, pp. 165–166)), compiled the YS and somebody else, called by tradition Vyāsa or Vedavyāsa, composed the YBh. In his publications Maas calls into question this widespread view. He bases his arguments on the analysis of the 25 manuscripts he used for his critical edition of the first chapter of the YS and YBh, as well as on the external evidence. Maas says that numerous medieval sources (“dating from the tenth century onwards” (2006, pp. XIV–XV., 2013, p. 57); see also Larson’s “Introduction to the philosophy of Yoga” in Larson and Bhattacharya 2011, p. 40) “support the hypothesis that a single person called Patañjali collected some *sūtras*, probably from different, now lost sources, composed most of the *sūtras* himself and provided the whole set with his own explanations in a work with the title *Pātañjala Yogaśāstra*” (2013, pp. 65–66). Maas argues that his hypothesis that the “*Pātañjala Yogaśāstra* is a single work with a single author” is also supported by the chapter colophons of all the 25 manuscripts of the YS and YBh the scholar used for his critical edition (2013, p. 58; 2006, pp. XV–XVII), by the fact that in nearly all manuscripts the YS appears together with the YBh (2013, pp. 58–62), and by the wording of some passages of these texts which indicate that they “were composed as a unified whole” (2013, pp. 63–65; 2006, pp. XVI–XVII). Maas considers the attribution of the YBh to Vyāsa to be of a late origin. According to Maas, the oldest unambiguous evidence of a separate authorship of Patañjali and Vyāsa appears in Mādhava’s *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* composed in the XIV century (2006, pp. XIII–XV, XVII, 2013, pp. 67–69). Defending his view on the origin and authorship of the YS and YBh, Maas develops argumentation introduced by Bronkhorst. We can find many important arguments presented by Maas in the publications of Bronkhorst (1985a, pp. 170–171, 179, 1985b, 1991, pp. 212–213). Bronkhorst formulates his hypothesis as follows: “The above observations have made it plausible that the author of the *Yogabhāṣya* brought the *Yoga sūtras* together, perhaps from different sources, and wrote a commentary which in some cases demonstrably deviated from the original intention of the *sūtras*” (1985b, p. 203). According to Bronkhorst, the person who brought together the *sūtras* known as the YS and wrote the commentary on them known as the YBh was probably either Sāṃkhya teacher Vindhyavāsin or Sāṃkhya teacher Patañjali (1985b, pp. 203–209).

The hypothesis of Bronkhorst–Maas that the collection of *sūtras* known to us as the YS had not existed before the author of the YBh compiled the *sūtras*, is well-grounded and worth special attention. However, further research is needed in order to explain some facts that can question this hypothesis. Among these facts are: Bhoja Deva in his *Rājamārtanda* comments on the YS only, which suggests that he treats the YS as a separate text, independent of the YBh; the author of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* uses the word ‘*sūtrakāra*’ for the author of the *sūtras* and the word ‘*bhāṣyakāra*’ for the author of the *bhāṣya* he comments upon (see Harimoto 2014, p. 7, footnote 1); as was noticed by Bronkhorst, the views attributed in the Sāṃkhya commentary *Yuktidīpikā* (ca. 600–700 CE according to Larson and Bhattacharya (1987, pp. 16, 20, 227–228)) to Patañjali agree with the views of the YS and do not agree with the views of the YBh, and the views attributed in the *Yuktidīpikā* to Vindhyavāsin agree with the views of the YBh and do not agree with the views of the YS (see Bronkhorst 1985b, pp. 206–208; see also Maas 2013, p. 65). The dates of the YS and YBh according to Larson: ca. 350–400 CE (Larson and Bhattacharya, pp. 9, 53, 161). Maas dates “the *Pātañjala Yogaśāstra*”, by which he understands these two texts as “a unified whole”, to the period of 325 to 425 CE (2013, p. 66).

³ Harimoto, who dealt with the manuscripts of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa*, writes that the colophons of the manuscripts ascribe this commentary to Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda (2014, p. 8). For many decades, the commentary has been a subject of vivid polemics among scholars, who discussed its date, authorship (first of all the question whether it was composed by great Advaitin Śaṅkara or not), and significance for the history of the Pātañjala Yoga philosophy and Indian philosophy in general. The overview of the opinions of the scholars who dealt with the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* can be found, for example, in Maas (2013, pp. 73–78), Larson and Bhattacharya (2011, pp. 239–240), and Harimoto (2014, pp. 225–251). Rukmani, the author of the newest English translation of the whole of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* and of a series of articles about this commentary, rejected the view ascribing it to the great Advaitin Śaṅkara, and tried to prove the later date of the commentary; one of the main arguments of Rukmani lay in that the *Vivaraṇa* contained references to the *Tattvavaiśārādī* of

Rājamārtaṇḍa, *Yogavārttika*. The aim of this article is to clarify the meaning of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh, the first and the most authoritative commentary to the YS.

In Brahmanical philosophy *saṃketa* is one of the main terms of the linguistic theory of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, which held that the relation between word and its meaning, primarily unrelated, was established by convention (*samaya*⁴/*saṃketa*). According to these philosophers, the relation between word and its meaning, primarily unrelated, was created by some person/persons and communicated to other persons who accepted (agreed with) this relation (*Vaiśeṣikasūtras*₁ II, 1, 18–19 and VII, 2, 15–24, corresponding to *Vaiśeṣikasūtras*₂ II, 1, 18–19 and VII, 2, 14–20; *Nyāyasūtras* II, 1, 53–56 and *Nyāyabhāṣya* II, 1, 52–56). In the later Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika texts the author of the primary linguistic convention is omniscient Īśvara, which creates (in fact, re-creates) words and their relation with their meanings in accordance with his will at the beginning of each new cycle of existence of the world (see, for example, Candrānanda's *Vaiśeṣikasūtravṛtti* II, 1, 18–19; Vācaspati Miśra's *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭkā* II, 1, 52–56; Śāṅkara Miśra's *Upaskāra* VII, 2, 20 and II, 1, 18–19).⁵

Feuerstein observes rightly: “The philosophical notion of the eternal relationship between word and objective referent ... is an integral part of the metaphysics of Classical Yoga” (1996, pp. 392–393), pointing out in this manner the importance of a careful study of the classical Yoga view on word, meaning, and the relationship between them for our understanding of the classical Yoga philosophy in general. It looks like not much has been done in the area of study of the classical Yoga philosophy of language, which remains one of the most abstruse and unexplored parts of the classical Yoga philosophy. This paper is a contribution to the

Footnote 3 continued

Vācaspati Miśra (see Rukmani 1992, 1993, 1998; “Introduction” in *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* (2), vol. 1, pp. IX–XXXI; “Introduction”, “Appendix I”, and “Appendix II” in *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* (2), vol. 2, pp. IX–X, 212–222). Rukmani concludes that the author of the *Vivarāṇa* “lived after the twelfth century of the Common Era” and “could not have lived later than the fifteenth century of the Common Era” (“Introduction” in *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* (2), vol. 2, p. IX). The later date of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa*, namely ca. 1050–1350, was accepted in the volume on Yoga of “Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies” (Larson and Bhattacharya 2011, pp. 9, 239–240). However, Harimoto undermined most of Rukmani's arguments, including her central argument that the author of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* knew the *Tattvavaiśārādī* of Vācaspati Miśra and referred to it (see Harimoto 2004, 2014, pp. 230–241). Harimoto, as well as Maas (2013, p. 75) and some other scholars, for example Bronkhorst (1985b, p. 203) and Wezler (1983, pp. 27–34), consider *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* to be the earliest known commentary to the YS and YBh. Maas makes the version of the YS and YBh contained in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* the basis of his critical edition of the first chapter of the YS and YBh (2008, p. 98). It is necessary to mention that Larson is quite skeptical about Maas's view that the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa*, which belongs to the southern tradition of transmission, contains more original readings than the northern line of tradition, called by Maas ‘the Vulgate’, transmitted by most of the printed editions, and about Maas's favoring “the *Vivarāṇa* readings over the Vulgate readings” (see Larson 2009, pp. 495–497).

⁴ In the YS and YBh the word *samaya* does not appear in the role of the term of the philosophy of language.

⁵ On the nature of the relation between word and its meaning in Vaiśeṣika and Nyāya see, for example: Dash (1991), Ganeri (1999, pp. 31–40), Potter (1977, p. 153), Potter and Bhattacharyya (2011, pp. 151–153) and Raja (1969, pp. 21–23).

reconstruction of the classical Yoga view on the relation between word and its meaning, for clarification of the term *saṃketa* is of vital importance for the understanding of this view. My research is inspired by Houben's article "Bhartṛhari's *saṃketa*/Helārāja's *saṃketa*. A contribution to the reconstruction of the Grammarian's discussion with the Vaiśeṣikas on the relation between *śabda* and *artha*" (1992), in which the scholar clarifies the sense of the terms *saṃketa* and *saṃketa* in the philosophy of the Grammarians. It is necessary to emphasize the preliminary character of the results of my research. It is possible that they will be made more precise by future studies devoted to the philosophy of language of classical Yoga, first of all by the reconstruction of the view on word and meaning of the YS, YBh, and *Tattvavaiśārādī*.⁶

It seems like there is no separate research devoted to the notion of *saṃketa* or to the relation between word and its meaning in classical Yoga. The scholars present different opinions concerning the notion of *saṃketa* in the YBh. Which of these opinions is true? Chakravarti (1933, pp. 349–350, 358–359) holds that the conception of the relation between word and its meaning and the notion of *saṃketa* of the YBh are similar to those of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas; he says also that the YS and YBh object to Bhartṛhari's conception of the relation between word and its meaning and his understanding of *saṃketa* (1933, pp. 358–360). Chakravarti writes about the linguistic conception presented in YBh I, 27 (see below my translation and analysis of this passage of the YBh): "A word naturally expresses that sense alone which was assigned to it by the divine volition. This

⁶ In this article I do not touch upon the questions of how word (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*) are understood in the classical Yoga texts. I assume preliminarily that in Yoga, as in other Brahmanical *darśanas*, in those contexts in which philosophers speak about meaning directly, meaning is understood as a referent, that is, a thing of the existent world to which word refers (and not a notion or something that exists in our thought only). In the YS, YBh, *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa*, and *Tattvavaiśārādī* I could not find passages in which the Yoga conception of meaning is presented directly. In YS III, 17 it is said about erroneous identification of *śabda* ('word'), *artha* ('meaning'), and *pratyaya* ('concept', 'notion', 'idea'), which are to be distinguished from one another. It follows from this that meaning of a word is clearly distinguished from a mental idea produced by it. What is this meaning (referent) of a word: the individual, the universal, or both? Commenting on YS III, 17, the author of the YBh, Vācaspati Miśra, and Bhoja Deva give as an example of 'meaning' (*artha*) a real empirical cow, possessing a dewlap and other attributes of a cow (see the YBh, *Tattvavaiśārādī*, and *Rājamārtanḍa*), and this can be interpreted as a suggestion that meaning is understood as the individual. In the final passage of his commentary to YS III, 17 the author of the YBh says that the real changeable object is the support (*ālambanībhūta*) of both word and mental idea, from which also it can follow that he understands meaning as the individual. But in the commentary to YS I, 49 he holds that word has the relation with the universal, and not with the individual (see below my analysis of the meaning of the word *saṃketa* in YBh I, 49); the same is clearly stated in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* and *Tattvavaiśārādī* I, 49. Bhoja Deva, commenting upon YS III, 17, explains *artha* as *jāti-guṇa-kriyā-ādi* ('the universal, the quality, action, etc.'), and commenting on YS I, 42, he explains *artha* as *jāty-ādi* ('the universal, etc.'). It follows from this that according to Bhoja Deva word denotes the universal or both the universal and the individual. My hypothesis is that according to Pātañjala Yoga word means the universal directly (for the relation between word and meaning is permanent (see below my analysis of YBh I, 27), and the permanent character of this relation requires the permanent character of meaning) and the individual indirectly. I do not claim that in all contexts a referent is understood by 'meaning' (*artha*). I assume that in some contexts Yoga philosophers, as well as philosophers of other Brahmanical *darśanas*, by meaning understand sense. Such understanding of meaning can occur in the contexts where they do not define meaning directly. For more detailed (though preliminary) remarks about the meaning of 'meaning' (*artha*) in Yoga and other Brahmanical *darśanas* see Łucyszyna (2014). The issue of word and meaning in classical Yoga requires a separate careful study.

saṅketa or the Will of God (*saṁaya*) is the connection that exists between a word and the object that is symbolized by it" (1933, pp. 349–350).

Coward's opinion in his book "The *sphoṭa* theory of language" is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, he says (1997, p. 34) about the YBh's view on the relation between word and its meaning presented in the commentary to YS I, 27: "The conventional activity of Īśvara is only for the purpose of manifesting this meaning which is already inherently existing." On the other hand, after citing the passage of Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on YBh I, 27, he says (1997, p. 34): "According to the *Yoga* School Īśvara or God repeatedly recreates this same convention in each new creation" It follows from the first citation that Īśvara does not create, but only manifests the relation between words and their meanings, and from the second citation it follows that Īśvara creates this relation—in accordance with the relation of the previous cycles of existence of the world. In the second citation Īśvara seems to act as an author of the primary linguistic convention—as in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika. It looks like in his second statement Coward treats the view of the *Tattvavaiśārādī* as the view of Pātañjala Yoga in general (wherein I, however, do not agree with him). In his later book "Yoga and psychology", devoted to Pātañjala Yoga, Coward's opinion is devoid of the above ambiguity. Characterizing the YBh's view on the relation between word and meaning presented in YBh I, 27, Coward (2002, p. 17) writes: "The conventional usage of words serves only to reveal the fixed relations and meanings that have permanently existed." Coward's opinion here is opposite to the opinion of Chakravartī, and I agree with Coward.

The main passage for our analysis is the YBh commentary on YS I, 27. The *sūtra* is: *tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ* || ("The [word] expressing (*vācaka*) Him is *praṇava* [i. e., the sacred syllable *om*].") This *sūtra* is a part of the context in which Pātañjali introduces his idea of Īśvara and recommends the repetitive recitation (*japa*) of the syllable *om* and contemplation (*bhāvana*) upon its meaning (*artha*), that is, Īśvara (*sūtras* I, 23–29). The YBh commentary to this *sūtra* contains the question about the nature of the relation between word and its meaning and the Bhāṣyakāra's answer on it. I shall cite this commentary in full:

The [object] expressed (*vācya*) [by *praṇava*, i. e., the sacred syllable *om*] is Īśvara.

- Is its being the [word] expressing [this object] (*vācakatva*) established by convention (*saṁketa-kṛta*) or permanent (*sthita*), as [the relation] between the lamp and light?
- The relation of this [object] expressed [by the word] (*vācya*) to the [word] expressing [it] (*vācaka*) is permanent (*sthita*). However (*tu*), convention (*saṁketa*) illuminates (*jvalayati*) that very (*eva*) meaning (*artha*)⁷—as the

⁷ The reading of most manuscripts transmitting the Vulgate is (see the critical edition prepared by Maas, p. 43):

saṁketas tv īśvarasya sthitam evārtham abhinayati /

However (*tu*), the convention (*saṁketa*) of Īśvara reveals (*abhinayati*) the meaning (*artha*) [which is] permanent (*sthita*) indeed (*eva*).

This sentence of the Vulgate is ambiguous. It can also be translated as follows:

relation between father and son [which is] permanent (*sthita*) is made known (*dyotyate*) by convention (*saṁketa*): “This is his father”, “This is his son”. In other cycles of existence of the world (*sarga*),⁸ too, exactly the same convention (*saṁketa*) is assumed (*kriyate*), dependent on the denotative power (*śakti*) of the expressing [word] (*vācaka*) in respect of the [object] expressed [by it] (*vācya*).⁹ The scriptural authorities (*āgamin*) state that the relation between word (*śabda*) and [its] meaning (*artha*) is eternal (*nitya*) because of the eternal character (*nityatā*) of consensus (*saṁpratipatti*) [of the users of language].¹⁰

It is clear from this passage that the Bhāṣyakāra’s understanding of the term *saṁketa* does not coincide with its understanding in the philosophy of language of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas. It is only in the opponent’s question in the very beginning of the cited passage the term *saṁketa* has the same sense as in the philosophy of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, that is, it means convention as a creation by some person/persons of the relation between word and meaning, unrelated before this act, and communication of this relation to other persons accepting it. The Bhāṣyakāra’s *saṁketa* is not the same as *saṁketa* about which the opponent asks him. The opponent asks whether the relation between word and its meaning is ‘established by convention’ (*saṁketa-kṛta*) or permanent (*sthita*). For the author of the YBh, as well as for the opponent, ‘convention’ (*saṁketa*) is the key term of the conception of relation between word and its meaning, but for the Bhāṣyakāra the act of establishing convention (agreement, consensus) concerning word meanings never took place. For the Bhāṣyakāra, unlike for the opponent, convention (agreement, consensus) concerning the relation between word and its meaning and the permanence of this relation are not alternative (mutually exclusive). The Bhāṣyakāra says that according to the ‘scriptural authorities’ (*āgamin*) the relation between word and meaning is eternal (*nitya*), because

Footnote 7 continued

However (*tu*), the convention (*saṁketa*) concerning [the word denoting] Īśvara reveals (*abhinayati*) the meaning (*artha*) [which is] permanent (*sthita*) indeed (*eva*).

⁸ *Sarga*—literally ‘creation’.

⁹ The reading of this sentence in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (according to the critical edition of Harimoto—see *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (3)):

sarggādiṣv api vācyavācakaśaktipekṣaḥ saṁketaḥ kriyate /

And (*api*) convention (*saṁketa*), dependent on the denotative power (*śakti*) of the expressing [word] (*vācaka*) in respect of the [object] expressed [by it] (*vācya*), is assumed (*kriyate*) at the beginnings of the cycles of existence of the world (*sarga*).

¹⁰ *vācya īśvaraḥ / kim asya saṁketakṛtaḥ vācakatvam atha pradīpaprakāśavat sthitam iti / sthito’nya vācyasya vācakena saṁbandhaḥ / saṁketas tu tam evārthaṁ jvalayati / yathā sthitaḥ pitāputrayoḥ saṁbandhaḥ saṁketena dyotyate ayam asya pitā ayam asya putraḥ iti / sargāntareṣv api vācyavācakaśaktipekṣas tathaiva saṁketaḥ kriyate / saṁpratipattinīyatayā nityaḥ śabdārthasaṁbandhaḥ ity āgamināḥ pratijānate //* (The text of the YBh according to the critical edition of Maas. In this article the basic version of the passages from the first chapter of the YS and YBh is always given according to the critical edition of Maas.).

consensus (*saṃpratipatti*) of the users of language concerning word meanings is eternal, that is, having neither beginning nor end.

Yoga, unlike Mīmāṃsā and like the Grammarians (which hold, as Yoga presented in the YBh, that the relation between word and its meaning is eternal and not created by any person), accepts the conception of periodic dissolutions of the world (*pralaya*). In the context of Yoga this eternal (permanent) character of the relation between word and its meaning probably should be understood not as an actual eternal existence, but as an actual existence from the beginning of creation to the *pralaya* and reappearance from *prakṛti* at the beginning of a new creation, taking place after the *pralaya*, during which word together with its denotative power relating word to its meaning subsists in *prakṛti* in a potential state. After each *pralaya* the *saṃketa*, that is, the agreement of the users of language concerning the meanings of words, which is the same in all creations, is somehow made known to the users of the language of the new cycle of existence of the world, and they continue the agreement. Possibly it is Īśvara who communicates the *saṃketa* after the *pralaya* to the future users of language. If we consider the reading of the Vulgata (given in the footnote 7), we can interpret the text as speaking about ‘the convention of Īśvara’ (*īśvarasya saṃketaḥ*). This ‘convention of Īśvara’ is a communication by Īśvara of the beginningless linguistic convention. Unlike in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Īśvara is not an author of the content of the linguistic convention; he only makes known the convention concerning the relation between words and their meanings to the future users of language.

In YBh I, 27 the term *saṃketa* is used in 3 meanings: (1) in the sense it has in the philosophy of language of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas¹¹ (in the YBh it appears in this sense in the question of the opponent); (2) in the meaning of the tradition of the usage of words (this is the main meaning of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh); (3) in the sense of transmitting (communicating, delivering, revealing, making known) the tradition of the usage of words. The English word ‘convention’ can mean both a newly established agreement and an agreement, consensus as a tradition, established custom, or established practice.¹² Thus the English word ‘convention’ fits both the meaning (1) and meaning (2) mentioned above. For this reason the term *saṃketa* can

¹¹ Their understanding of convention is explained in the beginning of this article.

¹² As to the Sanskrit word *saṃketa*, I agree with Houben (1992, p. 231) who says that in the dictionaries “there is no explicit mention of ‘convention as an established custom’”, for I have never encountered this meaning. These are some of the meanings of the word *saṃketa* according to the Sanskrit-English dictionary of Monier-Williams (1995): ‘agreement’, ‘compact’, ‘stipulation’, ‘assignment with’, ‘engagement’, ‘appointment’, ‘convention’, ‘consent’, ‘intimation’, ‘hint’, ‘allusion’. I would like to draw attention to the word *saṃketita*, which is the cognate word of *saṃketa*. The main meanings of the word *saṃketita* given in the dictionary of Monier-Williams: ‘agreed upon’, ‘fixed’, ‘settled’. The meanings of this word are worth attention, for the author of the YBh understands *saṃketa* as fixed or settled tradition, practice, or custom. The word *saṃketa*, which has the similar meanings with the word *saṃketa* when it functions as the term of the philosophy of language, is used in the sense of ‘established custom’ too, covering thus both meanings of the English word ‘convention’ mentioned above. Some of the meanings of the word *saṃketa* according to the dictionary of Monier-Williams: ‘coming together’, ‘meeting or a place of meeting’, ‘coming to a mutual understanding’, ‘agreement’, ‘compact’, ‘covenant’, ‘treaty’, ‘contract’, ‘arrangement’, ‘engagement’, ‘stipulation’, ‘conditions of agreement’, ‘terms’, ‘convention’, ‘conventional rule or usage’, ‘established custom’, ‘law’, ‘rule’, ‘practice’, ‘observance’, ‘order’, ‘direction’, ‘precept’, ‘doctrine’, ‘sign’, ‘hint’, ‘indication’. About the dictionary meanings of the

be translated as ‘convention’ also in those cases when it means tradition (established custom, established practice) of the usage of words, though when we translate this term as ‘convention’, a special explanation of its meaning should be given for the reader. Besides this suitability of the English word ‘convention’ for translating the term *saṃketa* in the context of the YBh too, I have also another reason for rendering it as ‘convention’ in the context of this commentary. I think it is possible that the Bhāṣyakāra’s choice of the term *saṃketa*, which means agreement, is deliberate, not adventitious. The reason why I think so I shall present below.

It is not clear from the majority of the Bhāṣyakāra’s commentary whether he speaks about the relation between the syllable *om* and its referent (Īśvara) or whether he speaks about the relation between word and meaning in general, but from the last sentence it follows that the Bhāṣyakāra keeps in mind both the relation between the syllable *om* and Īśvara and the relation between word and meaning in general. Other passages of the YBh too (these passages will be analyzed below) confirm that in the commentary to YS I, 27 cited above the Bhāṣyakāra presents his view on the relation between word and meaning in general, and not only on the relation between the syllable *om* and Īśvara.

It is worth noting that the meanings of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh are similar to its meanings in the philosophy of the Grammarians. Houben undertook a careful analysis of the meaning of the terms *samaya* and *saṃketa* in the *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartṛhari (between 450 and 510 CE) and of the meaning of the term *saṃketa* in Helārāja’s (about 980 CE)¹³ commentary on it; Houben shows that these Grammarians understood *samayasaṃketa* in a different way than the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas. I shall cite the main results of Houben’s analysis. Houben (1992, p. 238) writes: “... the following meanings of *saṃketa* may be distinguished in Helārāja’s commentary: (1) a well established custom with regard to the relation between word and meaning (Bhartṛhari’s *samaya* in the *Vākyapadīya* 3.3.31 cd); (2) convention as the creation of an entirely new relation (the Vaiśeṣikas’ convention, not accepted as an important factor in language); (3) reproduction or transmission of an already given relation.” The main meaning of this term in Helārāja’s commentary is meaning (1). Houben (1992, p. 224) writes that commenting on *Vākyapadīya* 3.3.31 cd, Helārāja explains Bhartṛhari’s *samaya*, which corresponds to Helārāja’s *saṃketa*, in the following way: *vṛddha-vyavahāraparamparā* “the tradition of the verbal usage of the elders”. Meanings (1) and (3) cover understanding of the *saṃketa* by Helārāja himself. In the *Vākyapadīya* of Bhartṛhari in most cases the term *samaya* is used instead of Helārāja’s *saṃketa*. As it follows from Houben’s analysis, Bhartṛhari’s usages of the term *samaya* correspond to meanings (1) and (2) of the term *saṃketa* in Helārāja’s commentary. Houben (1992, p. 236) says that the term *saṃketa* occurs only once in Bhartṛhari’s *Vākyapadīya*—in the meaning (1). Meaning (1) reflects Bhartṛhari’s own understanding of *samayasaṃketa*. The first and main meaning of the

Footnote 12 continued

words *saṃketa* and *samaya* see also Houben (1992, pp. 221–222, 231–232). When the words *samaya* and *saṃketa* function as terms of the philosophy of language, they have similar meanings.

¹³ The dates of Bhartṛhari and Helārāja are given according to Coward and Raja (2001, pp. 121, 193).

Grammarians' *saṃketa/samaya* (see meanings listed by Houben) corresponds to the second and main meaning of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh (see meanings listed by me above), the third meaning of the Grammarians' *saṃketa* corresponds to the third meaning of this term in the YBh (these two meanings reflect Grammarians' and YBh's understanding of linguistic convention), and the second meaning of the term *saṃketa/samaya* in the texts of the Grammarians corresponds to the first meaning of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh (this meaning reflects understanding of linguistic convention by the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas).

In the light of our comparison of the notion of *saṃketa* in the YBh and the texts of the Grammarians, Coward's main thesis about "Patañjali's Yoga contribution to Bhartṛhari" (2002, p. IX), defended by him in Part I of his book "Yoga and psychology: language, memory, and mysticism" (2002, pp. 11–50), seems worth special attention. It is possible to draw parallels not only between the notions of linguistic convention in the YBh and in the *Vākyapadīya*, but also between other notions and ideas of the philosophy of language appearing in these texts. For example, according to both these texts: erroneous superimposition of one over the other (identification) of word and its meaning takes place in ordinary language usage¹⁴ (see Coward 1997, p. 117, 2002, p. 33; Houben 1992, pp. 235–236, 1997, pp. 113–115); the smallest meaningful unit is a sentence (in the YBh the Bhāṣyakāra implies this in his commentary to YS III, 17) (see Coward 2002, p. 33); a word is an indivisible unity which has a mental nature (this idea is expressed by the author of the YBh in his commentary to YS III, 17, though he does not use the term *sphoṭa*, and his concept of word may be different from the concept of Bhartṛhari). Even more striking is a similarity of the Bhāṣyakāra's and Bhartṛhari's (*Vākyapadīya* III, 3, 31) statements that the relation between word and meaning is made known due to 'convention'—as the relation between parent and son (the Bhāṣyakāra speaks about the relation between father and son, Bhartṛhari—about the relation between mother and son¹⁵; the Bhāṣyakāra uses the term *saṃketa*, Bhartṛhari—*samaya*) (see Houben 1992, pp. 223, 225). However, it seems to me that at this stage of inquiry into the Pātañjala Yoga philosophy of language it is not possible to state with certainty whether Bhartṛhari was influenced by the YS and YBh or whether both Bhartṛhari and the Bhāṣyakāra were influenced by the *Mahābhāṣya* (II century BC)¹⁶ of Patañjali the Grammarian (both Bhartṛhari and the Bhāṣyakāra¹⁷ could consider themselves continuators of his thought).

¹⁴ In YS and YBh III, 17 it is said about erroneous identification of word, meaning, and mental idea.

¹⁵ Houben (1992, p. 223) comments upon this example: "If there is any relation that is a good example of a relation *not* created by convention, then it is the relation between mother and child".

¹⁶ The date of the *Mahābhāṣya* is given according to Raja (Coward and Raja 2001, p. 115).

¹⁷ *Sūtra* I, 1 of the YS and the beginning of the YBh commentary to this *sūtra* imitate the opening of the *Mahābhāṣya*. It can be an evidence that the authors/author of the YS and YBh were/was influenced by the *Mahābhāṣya*. However, scholars express uncertainty about the validity of the transmission of the *Mahābhāṣya* in the existing editions of this text and the need for a new critical edition of the *Mahābhāṣya*. See, for example, the critical edition of the first chapter of the YS and YBh prepared by Maas, p. 89, note 1.2, and Harimoto (2014, p. 194, footnote 366).

Let us proceed to considering other usages of the term *saṁketa* in the YBh. The following passage of the YBh III, 17 confirms what we said above about the main meaning of this term in the YBh:

And the convention (*saṁketa*), having the form of a mutual superimposition (*itaretarādhyāsarūpa*) of word (*pada*) and word meaning (*padārtha*) [i.e., the object to which the word refers], is in its essence what has been handed down by memory [of the users of language] (*smṛtyātmaka*).¹⁸ “This object (*artha*) is the same as this word (*śabda*), [and] this word (*śabda*) is the same as this object (*artha*)”—thus the convention (*saṁketa*) takes the form of mutual superimposition (*itaretarādhyāsarūpa*) [of word and object]. In the same way these [three]—word (*śabda*), object (*artha*), and idea (*pratyaya*)—get confused because of [their] mutual superimposition (*itaretarādhyāsa*), [for example,] the word (*śabda*) ‘cow’, the object (*artha*) ‘cow’, and the notion (*jñāna*) ‘cow’. He who knows the distinction between them is all-knowing.¹⁹

The most important confirmation of what has been said above about *saṁketa* of the YBh is that *saṁketa* is understood by its author as *smṛti*—‘the tradition’, or ‘what has been handed down by memory’. In fact, the Bhāṣyakāra defines here the linguistic convention of using words for their appropriate objects as the tradition of the usage of words, that is, the usage of words which has been handed down by the memory of generations of users of language.

This passage is a part of the commentary to the following *sūtra* of the YS: *śabdārthapratyayānām itaretarādhyāsāt saṁkaras tatpravibhāgasamānyamāt sarvabhūtarutajñānam* // (“Confusion of word (*śabda*), [its] meaning [i.e., the object denoted by it] (*artha*), and the idea (*pratyaya*) [occurs] because of [their] mutual superimposition (*itaretarādhyāsa*). By *samānyama* on the distinction between them knowledge of [the meaning] of cries of all beings [is attained].”) Feuerstein (1996, p. 119) gives a lucid interpretation of this *sūtra*: “As I understand it, this simply means that by nature *śabda*, *artha* and *pratyaya* are experienced as one. A sound uttered by a living being is always the bearer of meaning. It is also accompanied by an image in the mind of the percipient. If the sound is unknown, it can be understood by directly perceiving the idea in the mind of the sender. To achieve this direct perception or *sākṣātkāra* of the idea in the sender’s consciousness, the *yogin* must make the distinction between word, meaning and image the subject of his meditative absorption and ecstasy.” In his commentary to this *sūtra* the author of the YBh, first, presents the Yoga philosophy of language (mainly the conception of word), second, emphasizes the distinct nature of word, meaning (that is, the object which the word refers to), and mental idea. It follows from the YBh that the relation between word and meaning, though permanent (having neither beginning nor end), is not inseparable. Object is not related inseparably to word; object exists and can be cognized independently of word which denotes it.

¹⁸ It can be also translated as: “...; is in its essence the tradition (*smṛti*) [of the usage of words].”

¹⁹ *saṁketas tu padapadārthayor itaretarādhyāsarūpaḥ smṛtyātmakaḥ / yo'yam śabdaḥ so'yam artho yo'yam arthaḥ so'yam śabda ity evam itaretarādhyāsarūpaḥ saṁketo bhavatīti / evam ete śabdārthapratyayā itaretarādhyāsāt saṁkīrṇāḥ gaur iti śabdo gaur ity artho gaur iti jñānam / ya eṣām pravibhāgañāḥ sa sarvavit /*

In YBh III, 17 the word *saṃketa* appears 6 times (separately or as a part of a compound). 2 occurrences of this word are in the passage cited above. One of these 2 usages, as it was mentioned above, confirms the Bhāṣyakāra's understanding of *saṃketa* presented in YBh I, 27. The other of these 2 usages, as well as 4 usages not cited here, are not in conflict with this understanding; *saṃketa* can be interpreted in all these 5 cases as 'tradition of the usage of words' or 'established (practice/custom of the) usage of words'. In these 5 cases *saṃketa* is regarded as something due to which or in which word and object (or word, object, and idea) are related to each other or mutually superimposed upon each other. The Bhāṣyakāra says that it is because of the convention (*saṃketa*), which has neither beginning nor end, a fixed sequence of sounds is comprehended by mind as an indivisible unity (i.e., word) related to the certain object as its meaning. It is clear from the context of YBh III, 17 that the Bhāṣyakāra does not accept the primary linguistic convention established deliberately by Īśvara or some other person(s) (the conception of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas), for he says that the mind of the ordinary man (*loka-buddhi*) is "penetrated with the impressions of the usage of language which has(ve) no beginning" (*anādi-vāg-vyavahāra-vāsana-anuvidha*). According to the Bhāṣyakāra, language (or the usage of language, or the impressions left by the usage of language—depending on our interpretation of the Sanskrit compound) has(ve) no beginning, therefore, *saṃketa* is understood by him as the tradition of the usage of words which has no beginning, and not as a deliberate act of establishing the relation between word and meaning unrelated before this act. According to the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, the agreement concerning meanings of words *has* beginning (the primary agreement is established at the beginning of each new creation, though it is the same in all the creations), but according to the Bhāṣyakāra, language and *saṃketa* have *no* beginning. YBh's *saṃketa* is different from the *saṃketa* of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas.

Two more usages of the word *saṃketa* (as a part of the compound *śabda-saṃketa*) we find in YBh I, 42 and I, 43 (1 time this word occurs in YS I, 42 and 1 time in YS I, 43). *Sūtras* I, 42 and I, 43 of the YS are devoted to the *śavitarkā samāpatti* and *nirvitarkā samāpatti* respectively. In YS I, 42 it is said that *śavitarkā samāpatti* is 'confused' (*saṃkīrṇā*) because of the 'mental construct of word, meaning, and knowledge' (*śabda-artha-jñāna-vikalpa*). The author of the YS by 'mental construct of word, meaning, and knowledge' understands the false identification of the word, the object to which the word refers, and the mental idea/notion of this object—compare YS III, 17 (cited above) about the false identification of word (*śabda*), the object it refers to (*artha*), and the mental idea (*pratyaya*). In the next *sūtra* I, 43 it is said that in the *nirvitarkā samāpatti*, which takes place 'when the memory is purified' (*smṛti-parisuddhau*), the mind is 'as it were devoid of its own nature' (*svarūpa-śūnyā iva*)—this state is characterized as 'that in which the object only is manifested' (*artha-mātra-nirbhāsā*). The author of the YBh, commenting on these *sūtras*, says that in order to pass from the state of *śavitarkā samāpatti*, in which word (*śabda*), its object (*artha*), and the mental ideal notion (*jñāna*) are not distinguished from one another, to the higher state of *nirvitarkā samāpatti*, in which mind takes the form of the object, manifesting it as it is, without confusing it with the notion (mental idea, concept) of this object and the

word denoting it, the memory is to be purified from *śabda-saṃketa*. In this context *śabda-saṃketa* is understood by the Bhāṣyakāra as that from which memory is to be purified in order to reach the higher level of the yogic path, that is, the *nirvītarkā samāpatti*. *Śabda-saṃketa*, or ‘word convention(s)’, can be interpreted there as ‘established usage(s) of words’ stored in our memory.

There is one more usage of the word *saṃketa* in the YBh. It occurs in YBh I, 49, in the commentary to the following *sūtra*: *śrutānumānābhyām anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthavattvāt* // (“[The wisdom (*prajñā*) attained in the state of *nirvīcārāsamāpatti*] has an object different from [an object] of the authoritative verbal testimony (*śruta*) and inference (*anumāna*), for it has the individual (*viśeṣa*) as its object.”)²⁰ In the beginning of the commentary to this *sūtra* the Bhāṣyakāra says that authoritative verbal testimony has the universal (*sāmānya*) only as its object,²¹ and the individual (*viśeṣa*) cannot be expressed by it. He explains it in the following way: *na hi viśeṣeṇa kṛtasamketaḥ śabdaḥ* /²² The sentence is difficult to interpret. Literally it can be translated: “For it is not [so] that word has convention (*saṃketa*) by/with/through/because of the individual.” It can be interpreted: “For it is not so that word has established usage (*saṃketa*) based on the individual.” In the YBh the beginningless *saṃketa* is understood as that due to which word and object are related to each other (see above our analysis of the meaning of the word *saṃketa* in YBh III, 17). In this passage of the YBh the term *saṃketa* has the similar connotation. The Bhāṣyakāra says that word does not express the individual, for by/due to the convention (established usage, tradition of its usage) word is related not to the individual, but to the universal.

²⁰ This is the basic reading of the critical edition of Maas. The reading supported by most of the manuscripts (see the critical edition of Maas, p. 81):

śrutānumānaprajñābhyām anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt //

[The wisdom (*prajñā*) attained in the state of *nirvīcārāsamāpatti*] has an object different from [an object] of the verbal and inferential wisdom (*prajñā*), for its object is the individual (*viśeṣa*).

The reading of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (according to the reconstruction of the text of the YS and YBh contained in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* prepared by Maas in collaboration with Harimoto—see *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (4), p. 162):

sā punaḥ śrutānumānaprajñābhyām anyaviṣayā //

But it [that is, the wisdom (*prajñā*) attained in the state of *nirvīcārāsamāpatti*,] has an object different from [an object] of the verbal and inferential wisdom (*prajñā*).

²¹ Cf. YBh I, 25, where the Bhāṣyakāra says that the individual property/the individual (*viśeṣa*) can be known through the authoritative verbal testimony, and not through the inference by which the universal (*sāmānya*) only can be known. This inconsequence in the text of the YBh is noted by Maas (2010, pp. 389–390).

²² It is worth noting that the beginning of YBh I, 49 contained in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* differs from the basic reconstruction of this passage in the critical edition. According to the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa*, YBh I, 49 begins as follows (see *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (4), p. 162):

viśeṣo na saṃketayitum śakyate/sāmānyena hi kṛtasamketaḥ śabdo na viśeṣam abhidhātuṃ śaknoti /

The individual cannot be related by convention (*na saṃketayitum śakyate*) [to the word], for word has convention (*saṃketa*) by/with/through/because of the universal, [and] it is not able to express the individual.

After considering the usages of the term *saṃketa* occurring in the YBh I would like to explain why I often translate it as ‘convention’ in the context of this commentary. As I mentioned above, the English word ‘convention’ can mean also an agreement, consensus as a tradition, established custom, or established usage, fitting therefore for expressing the Bhāṣyakāra’s understanding of *saṃketa*. Why not translate *saṃketa* as ‘tradition of the usage of words’ or ‘established (practice/custom of the) usage of words’, avoiding thus an ambiguity of the English word ‘convention’ (which means also a newly established agreement)? In my opinion, it is very possible that the Bhāṣyakāra’s choice of the word *saṃketa*, which means agreement, was deliberate. As it follows from YS and YBh I, 42–43 and III, 17 (see our analysis above), word and its meaning (the object denoted by it) have a distinct nature; an object (*artha*) is not related inseparably to the word (*śabda*) which denotes it—an object exists and can be cognized independently of the word. The Bhāṣyakāra says that in order to cognize the object as it is mind is to be purified from *śabda-saṃketa*—‘word convention(s)’, or the ‘established usage(s) of words’ stored in our memory.²³

It looks like YBh’s view on the relation between word and its meaning is different from the view of Mīmāṃsā. According to *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* and *Śābarabhāṣya* I, 1, 5, the relation between word and its meaning is *utpattika* (‘original’, ‘primordial’, ‘natural’, ‘existential’). Śābara explains: the relation between word and meaning is *utpattika*, for it has its root in their *utpatti* (‘origin’), and the *utpatti* is interpreted by him as *bhāva* (‘existing’, ‘being’, or ‘nature’). Śābara says that this relation is inseparable (*aviyukta*) (see *Śābarabhāṣya* I, 1, 5). Both Śābara and the author of the YBh hold that this relation is *nitya* (‘permanent’, ‘eternal’) (the main term used by the author of the YBh is *sthita*, but he also refers to scriptural authorities who characterize the relation as *nitya*), it has neither beginning nor end, but the nature of the relation is understood by them differently. For the author of the YBh, unlike for Śābara, the relation between word and meaning is not rooted in their nature and not inseparable.

It is very probable that by using the word *saṃketa* the author of the YBh wanted to emphasize that the relation the object has with the word denoting it does not belong to the nature of the object, but depends on agreement, i.e., consensus of the users of language. This consensus is eternal, but it is still a consensus. By stating the eternal character of the relation between word and its meaning, the author of the YBh probably wants to say that he does not believe in the linguistic convention as an act of establishing the relation between words and meanings primarily unrelated, understood as an act of creation of language and giving it to the future users of language which accept this gift (it is the linguistic convention of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas);²⁴ and by stating the conventional character of this relation, the author

²³ An excellent analysis of the YS and YBh passages about the mutual superimposition of word, its object, and the mental idea and the yogic practice of realizing distinctions between them and purifying the mind of concepts and word convention(s) is presented in the book of Jakubczak (2013, pp. 89–96, 144–147). In the context of her analysis the scholar points out “arbitrariness and relativity of all word conventions” according to classical Yoga (2013, p. 96).

²⁴ See arguments against this conception of linguistic convention as an absolute beginning of language presented by Mīmāṃsā (see *Śābarabhāṣya* I, 1, 5; Arnold 2006, pp. 458–476), the Grammarians (see Houben 1992, p. 233), and modern philosophers of language (see Arnold 2006, pp. 445–476). The main argument is lucidly summarized by Murti (1997, pp. IX–X): “Convention itself presupposes language, which is sought to be derived from convention. To make convention, words have to be used and

of the YBh probably wants to emphasize the fact that this relation, though having neither beginning nor end, nevertheless exists due to the agreement, or the consensus of the users of language (if this relation were not conventional, but rooted in the nature of the denoted object, then the Bhāṣyakāra's instruction of purification of mind of the *śabda-samketa* in order to cognize the object as it is had no sense). The relation between word and its meaning, though eternal, is not necessary, not rooted in their nature, and not inseparable.²⁵ If we translate the term *samketa* as 'tradition of the usage of words' or 'established (practice/custom of the) usage of words', and not as '(linguistic) convention', this term can lose its important connotation indicating that common agreement or consensus (general consensus of the users of language concerning the meanings of words), and not a nature of word and the object denoted by it forms the basis of the relation between them.²⁶ For this reason I accept 'convention' as the translation of the term *samketa* in the context of

Footnote 24 continued

understood by persons participating in the convention. This is clearly circular. Invoking God does not help here. How could God make known his intentions, his conventions between particular words and their specific meanings, to persons who did not use language already; there would be a communication-gap. And if men were already using language, God's convention does not obviously initiate language as claimed. However far back we might push the beginning of convention, we would still find language use preceding it. An absolute beginning of language is untenable. Linguistic usage is continuous."

²⁵ It is worth noting that the Yoga view on the relation between word and meaning in some important aspects can be compared with the theory of linguistic sign of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), though we should remember that Saussure's conception of word meaning is different from its understanding in the YBh (this difference is expressed in the following citation from Saussure's famous "Course in general linguistics": "The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image" (2011, p. 66)). According to Saussure, a linguistic sign is arbitrary in the sense that there is no natural relation between 'the signifier' and 'the signified', i.e., the acoustic pattern and the concept (meaning), but this relation is based on the convention, or agreement of the users of language. Linguistic signs are conventional, but language is not an agreement [not "a contract pure and simple" (Saussure 2011, p. 71)] which can be established or deliberately changed by somebody. The members of the linguistic community accept and transmit the language convention, but no person or group of persons is able to establish or change it according to its will. In this sense the linguistic sign is immutable. Language is a fixed tradition inherited from preceding generations and accepted by a community (Saussure 2011, pp. 65–78). It looks like these ideas of the famous Swiss linguist are strikingly similar to the Bhāṣyakāra's view on the relation between word and its meaning. Unlike for the Bhāṣyakāra, who says that the linguistic convention is the same in all the creations, for Saussure a linguistic sign is historically changeable. Language changes in spite of the inability of the users of language to change it deliberately (Saussure 2011, pp. 74–78).

²⁶ The following passage from YBh I, 27 can seem to contradict my interpretation of the relation between word and meaning (this passage is analyzed above): "The relation of this [object] expressed [by the word] (*vācya*) to the [word] expressing [it] (*vācaka*) is permanent (*sthita*). However (*tu*), convention (*samketa*) illuminates (*jvalayati*) that very (*eva*) meaning (*artha*)—as the relation between father and son [which is] permanent (*sthita*) is made known (*dyotyate*) by convention (*samketa*): 'This is his father', 'This is his son'." In my opinion, this contradiction is only apparent, not real: the Bhāṣyakāra does not suggest that the relation between word and its meaning is natural as the relation between father and son; the relation between father and son functions in the YBh as an example of the relation which is *not created* by convention, but only made known by it—it is in this sense only that the relation between father and its son is similar to the relation between word and its meaning. Cf. Houben's comment cited by me in footnote 15.

the YBh—until future studies of Pātañjala Yoga philosophy of language make my interpretation more precise.²⁷

The conclusion of my analysis of the meaning of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh is that YBh's understanding of linguistic convention is different from its understanding by the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas and similar to its understanding by the Grammarians, that is, by Bhartṛhari and his commentator Helārāja (as presented in Houben's article "Bhartṛhari's *samaya*/Helārāja's *saṃketa*. A contribution to the reconstruction of the Grammarian's discussion with the Vaiśeṣikas on the relation between *śabda* and *artha*", published in the "Journal of Indian Philosophy"). YBh's *saṃketa*, which I translate preliminarily as '(linguistic) convention', is not an agreement established by some person/persons, as the *samaya/saṃketa* of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, but an agreement in the sense of tradition, established practice, or established custom. The following interpretations of the term *saṃketa* reflect YBh's understanding of the linguistic convention: the tradition of the usage of words, established (practice/custom of the) usage of words. YBh's *saṃketa*, the same in all the creations, handed down by memory of the generations of users of language, has neither beginning nor end. This *saṃketa*, unlike *saṃketasamaya* of the Vaiśeṣikas and Naiyāyikas, is not re-created (re-established), but only made known (revealed) at the beginning of each cycle of existence of the world.

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Yoga Sanskrit Texts and Abbreviations

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²⁷ I'd like to emphasize once again the preliminary character of the rendering of the term *saṃketa* as 'convention' and of my considerations concerning the nature of the relation between word and its meaning in the YBh. The clarification of the term *saṃketa* in the YBh undertaken in this paper, which is a contribution to the study of the view on the relation between word and its meaning in the YBh and classical Yoga in general, is not sufficient for drawing definite conclusion concerning YBh's understanding of the nature of this relation.

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- Yogasūtras* (YS) and *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* (YBh). (1) *Samādhipāda. Das erste Kapitel des Pātañjalayogaśāstra zum ersten Mal kritisch ediert. The first chapter of the Pātañjalayogaśāstra for the first time critically edited* (2006). By Philipp André Maas. Aachen: Shaker Verlag. (Indologica Halensis. Geisteskultur Indiens. Texte und Studien. Band 9.); (2) = *Yogasūtras, Yogasūtrabhāṣya, and Tattvavaiśārādī* (1); (3) = *Yogasūtras, Yogasūtrabhāṣya, and Tattvavaiśārādī* (2).
- Yogasūtras* (YS), *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* (YBh), and *Tattvavaiśārādī*. (1) *Pātañjala-yoga-darśanam, Vācaspatimiśra-viracita-Tattvavaiśārādī-Vijñānabhikṣu-kṛta-Yogavārttika-vibhūṣita-Vyāsabhāṣya-sametam* (1971). Edited by Nārāyaṇa Miśra. Varanasi: Bhāratiya Vidyā Prakāśana; (2) *Pātañjalasūtrāṇi with the scholium of Vyāsa and the commentary of Vāchaspati* (1892). Edited by Rājārām Shāstrī Bodas. Bombay: Government Central Book Depot. (Bombay Sanskrit Series. No. XLVI).
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